RESOURCES AND SERVICES OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES IN GOA AND COASTAL KARNATAKA

Synopsis of the thesis

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by

Anuradha V

under the guidance of

Prof. A. K. Baradol

Professor and Chairman

Department of Library and Information Science

Mangalore University, Mangalore

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Department of Library and Information Science

Mangalore University, Mangalore

1. Introduction

Libraries are repositories of wisdom collected from the past and preserved for the present and the future. Learning, be it in any field, appears impossible without the resources of libraries. Theological learning is no exception. Theological libraries have played a major role in spreading knowledge about religion. With the spread of literacy such libraries have made the knowledge in the domain of religion available to those interested in the study of religion. These libraries are critical for the preparation of theological study and enlightenment and therefore play a significant role in the spread of theological education. Given the acknowledged importance of the theosophical libraries, it is surprising to note that there is no much awareness about the problems and issues involved related to these libraries.

A theological library can be defined as a special library having a collection of resources related to the religious, philosophical and spiritual traditions. The aim of a theological library is to make available a unique collection with significant works on philosophy and the world's religions to those who are interested.

Theological libraries themselves are a place of learning and an equal partner in theological education. Regardless of the era, they always have had their mission of bringing the people and information together.

The history of libraries and theology is largely a common chronicle. The earliest temples kept records and sacred texts in the form of manuscripts of different types and scrolls and held them in repositories. From the times immemorial, churches, synagogues, temples, pagodas, mosques and monasteries have preserved sacred

narratives, service books, monastic rules, and commentaries. Many of these shrines still house significant theological collections.

Goa and coastal Karnataka together account for a vast stretch of the western coast of India. This region is known as the Konkan or the Konkan coast or Karavali. The State of Goa and coastal Karnataka has a good presence of Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions. One can see harmonious blend in India's major religions in this region. However it is seen that this harmony is lacking among the libraries of different religion, functioning in this region. The theological libraries are found to be working in isolation. The present research is carried out to bring to light the presence of these libraries and to analyze their resources and services.

2. Review of Related Literature

A search for related literature was conducted and the same was reviewed.

A detailed historical background of theological libraries is provided by Dare (1994) in the article on theological libraries. According to the author theological learning is impossible without theological libraries collecting wisdom of the past and future theological discussions. The development of theological libraries in Asia, Africa, South America and Australia reflected the global spread of various religions. In many countries where Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam dominated their history, the national libraries developed strong theological collections. These collections included archival and manuscript materials that detailed their religious and historical development.

Stevens (2004) has pointed that theological librarianship fulfills the areas of ministry described in the Bible - administration, education,

service, stewardship, teaching, counseling and hospitality – making it valid and worthwhile ministry role at a theological institution. A brief comparison of the Islamic view point of theological librarianship is also undertaken. The author says that surprisingly there is lack of discussion about the specific role of theological librarians in the obtainable literature. Theological librarianship, it is argued, is a valid and important ministry role within the Christian arena, a view shared by the overwhelming majority of available literature.

Jordal (1990) has narrated the trends in American seminary librarianship through the twentieth century. This review is confined to Protestant graduate theological schools in the United States. According to him Seminary librarians tend to lack training in library science but were well educated in theology. However, their healthy attitude was clearly expressed in two particular respects; American Theological Library Association was established and theological librarians initiated the development of programs in library schools for theological librarianship. Seminary librarians are active in professional pursuits – teaching, service, research and publishing. Theological librarianship is distinguished as a creative profession with scholarly pursuits.

Penner (2007) has described that European theological libraries find themselves in the midst of the transitions caused by the changes in society, changes in expectations of younger generations, changes in theological education and more than all the changes in technology. Today's users need full range of resources in the form of books, journals, electronic databases and information in other media. Libraries should introduce and encourage technological developments and expose faculty and students to electronic resources. In future, theological libraries will remain hybrid libraries, combining both print and electronic resources.

3. Need for the study

No study has been carried out with regard to these theological libraries. As such the public at large is unaware of their existence and the treasure of knowledge that they possess. This has resulted in limited utilization of these libraries in general as well as the people of religions. The use of these libraries is limited to the people undergoing religious training and those attached to the parent institutions of these libraries. The present research is carried out to bring to light the presence of these libraries and to analyze their resources and services.

Theological libraries of this region work in isolation and have little cooperation among them. The present study will explore the possibility of networking of all theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka which would help and facilitate resource sharing among the libraries.

The literature search has proved that enough literature on theological libraries is not available. There are very few research reports available. Most of the literature is just the documentation of the prevailing scenario in different areas. The literature available is mostly about the libraries related to Christian theology and not other religions. The literature has emanated from regions like Australia, USA and Europe. The relevance of this study is stressed by the fact that not a single serious study on theological libraries was conducted in India.

4. Concepts used in the title of the study

The title of the research study is "RESOURCES AND SERVICES OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES IN GOA AND COASTAL KARNATAKA" The concepts/keywords in the title are defined below for their clarity.

4.**1 Resources**

The term 'resources' refers to the documents collected and organized in the libraries included in the study. The documents may be in any format from print to digital or manuscripts.

4.2. Services

The term 'services' refers to the services offered by the libraries in general to the users. They include services such as book loan, reference services, reprographic services, computer scanning, Internet facility and user orientation for readers.

4.3. Theological

The term 'theological' refers to the institutions established and maintained by certain religious groups to impart education and training for their religious practices and also centers conducting various religious activities.

4.4. Library

The term 'library' refers to any organized collection of information resources/documents maintained for the benefit of the users.

4.5. Goa and Costal Karnataka

These terms refer to the geographical area, i.e. the Goa State and the coastal districts of Karnataka State.

5. Objectives of the study

The following objectives were set forth for the research:

i. To explore the resources of the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka
ii. To review the facilities and services of the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka

iii. To find out the impact of Information Communications Technology(ICT) on the theological libraries of Goa and Coastal Karnataka

iv. To analyze the status and the qualifications of the personnel working in the libraries.

v. To find out user-satisfaction with regard to information resources of theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka.

vi. To study the users-satisfaction with regard to the services and facilities offered by the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka.

6. Scope of the study

The study is confined to the theological libraries of Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism and Sikhism. Total 55 theological libraries were studied for this research. There were 7556 registered readers in these libraries. Ten percent of the users i.e. 750 users were taken as a sample for the study.

The area covered under this study is Goa state and the coastal Karnataka. Coastal Karnataka consists of three districts of Karnataka viz., the Uttara Kannada district, Udupi district and the Dakshina Kannada district. These areas have a strong presence all the three major religions of India, i.e., Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. There are number of theological libraries in this area. So a study in this area will give a clear picture of the national heritage in the form of collections in theological libraries.

7. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

i. Frequency of users' visit to theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka vary across the religion.

ii. There is no relation between the availability of internet facility in the library and religion with regard to the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka

iii. There is no relation between provision of open access to resources and age of the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka.

iv. Demand for computerization of theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka varies as per the status of the users.

v. Among the theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka, availability of the computers and age of the theological libraries are correlated.

vi. Among theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka, there exists a relation between status of the library users and their satisfaction with respect to the resources of the libraries.

vii. Cataloguing is not a matter of concern to theological libraries in Goa and Coastal Karnataka.

viii. Theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka do not show inclination towards internet access and use of e-resources.

8. Research Methodology

Present research is non-experimental and descriptive one. Surveys are useful when researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be observed, for example, opinion of users on library services. The survey technique was considered suitable since it provides for quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of population by studying a sample of that population.

9. The Population

There are a number of theological institutions in the area under study. Many of these possess a good collection of documents. However, some do not perform even the basic functions of a library.

Such libraries were not considered for the study and only those libraries which were organized and functional were visited by the researcher. Total 55 theological libraries have been studied.

10. Sampling

As the study was conducted among all the 55 theological libraries that performed regular functions and services of collection and utilization, no sampling was required. However to find a suitable sample of users, ten per cent (750) out of the total number of registered users of each library under study (7556) has been taken as the sample. The 750 users were randomly taken from the users available when the researcher visited the libraries.

11. Instruments used for the collection of data

A structured questionnaire was prepared to the collect data about libraries from the librarians or officials in charge of the libraries. This had both open ended and closed questions with options made available to answer. A questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the users.

12.Pilot study

Before finalizing the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted to understand the state of affairs in the theological libraries under study. Based on the objectives and the hypothesis and with the help of literature reviewed, tentative questionnaires were prepared both for collecting the data on libraries and to obtain users' responses. With the help of this questionnaire five libraries -- two from Goa and three from coastal Karnataka -- were visited to collect the information. Similar questionnaire was also prepared to collect users' responses and was distributed among twenty users- - ten from Goa and ten from Coastal Karnataka. The pilot study helped the researcher to find out

shortcomings in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was redesigned accordingly for the final study.

13. Data collection

For the purpose of data collection, the librarians/officials in-charge of the libraries were contacted. All the libraries in goa and coastal Karnataka were covered.

The total number of respondents from each library was decided on the basis of the number of registered users in that library.

The librarians/library- in-charges were approached in their work places and the users were approached in the library and classrooms. Information was collected with the help of questionnaire and interview.

14. Analysis of the data

The data collected through the questionnaires was coded in software SPSS Version 13. The data was analyzed and tables and graphs were generated. Based on the analysis of the data the findings have been reported. Further the hypotheses were tested using different statistical tests (chi-square, co-relation and ANNOVA)

15. Research reporting

The research report is prepared using MS-Word. Preparation of reference lists and citations was done using EndNote Ver 9. Software. APA Style Manual (5th edition) has been followed for presentation of the thesis. The references are also provided as per this style.

The research is being reported in the form of a thesis which has the following chapters;

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Infrastructure and Services of Theological Libraries

Chapter 5: User Perception on Theological Libraries

Chapter 6: Findings and Conclusion

manual. The references and citations were incorporated in the thesis using the EndNote software.

16. Findings and conclusion

The analysis of the data in the previous chapters revealed the existence of immense treasure of information resources in the theological libraries of Goa and coastal Karnataka. Some of the major findings of the research are presented below.

1. Majority of the theological libraries do not possess separate building for the library. They operate in one portion of the building of the parent institution.
2. Islamic theological libraries have more number of registered users than libraries of other religion. Hindu theological libraries are next to the Islamic libraries.
3. The average number of users visiting the library per day is highest among the Christian theological libraries and it is lowest among Hindu and Jain theological libraries.
4. Christian theological libraries possess the largest collection of books among all theological libraries.
5. Theological libraries in Goa possess more number of books than theological libraries in coastal Karnataka.

6. The growth of collection in theological libraries is proportional to the age of the libraries with an exception of Hindu theological libraries.
7. The Christian theological libraries possess the largest collection of books in English language as compared to other theological libraries.
8. The collection of theological libraries is concentrated on books on their own religion.
9. 38% of the theological libraries do not have a library committee.
10. 48 out of 55 theological libraries do not have specific budget allotted for them.
11. Out of 55 theological libraries 36 libraries are managed by non-professional staff.
12. Majority (65%) of the theological libraries do not possess catalogue for their collection.
13. The theological libraries of recent origin possess catalogues for their collections.
14. Routine preservation measures like dusting and fumigation are done by the theological libraries to preserve their collection.
15. 60% of the theological libraries follow open access system.
16. Theological libraries of recent origin adopt open access system than the libraries which are established earlier.
17. Majority of the theological libraries provide lending service.
18. All the theological libraries are providing reference service to the users.

19. The theological libraries of recent origin possess more number of computers.
20. Number of computers is found to be increasing along with the size of the collection in theological libraries
21. 70% of the theological libraries do not have the Internet access.
22. Majority (69%) of the theological libraries do not take part in any resource sharing activity.
23. 80% of the theological librarians are not in favor of networking of libraries.
24. Students together with faculty members constitute a majority among the users of the theological libraries.
25. Library is the most preferred source of information on theology for the users.
26. Majority (67%) of the users visit their theological libraries to read books.
27. To locate the required documents, majority of the users of theological libraries consult the library staff.
28. Most of the users of the theological libraries depend on the libraries of their respective institutions than on other libraries for their information needs.
29. Majority of the users of the theological libraries are in favor of networking of the libraries for resource sharing.
30. Books are the most preferred form of resource for majority of the users of the theological libraries.
31. 67.07% of the users of the theological libraries are satisfied with the resources available in their libraries.

32. Majority of the users are satisfied with the collection of books in their libraries.

33. 82.67% of the users are in favor of staff having professional qualification for their libraries.

34. Majority(76.27%) of the users are in favor of automation of their libraries.

35. 81.07% of the users in the theological libraries are in favor of networking of the libraries for resource sharing.

17. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research study, following suggestions/recommendations have been made :

1. It is observed that many of the theological libraries do not have professionally qualified staff to manage the libraries. Hence it is suggested that the authorities encourage the library personnel to attend seminars and conferences in the field. This will help them keep abreast with the change scenario in the field of library science and they will help them to acquire knowlwdge about the new developments taking place in the field.

2. The authorities should motivate the library personnel to undertake short-duration courses and workshops to improve their skills.

3. The management of parent institution should encourage the library staff to continue further their education and acquire the desired qualifications related to library and information science. .

4. It can be seen that the theological libraries lack professional management. This is reflecting in areas like cataloguing,

classification and lack of automation in the libraries. An attempt needs to be made by the parent institution/authorities to employ professionally qualified staff for their libraries.

5. The theological libraries do not have a library committee. A library committee can be set up to take certain policy decisions concerning the library. Such a committee can take decisions in a democratic way keeping the interests of all the stake holders of the library in mind. The establishment of a library committee can improve the overall approach and the condition of the libraries to a great extent.

6. The theological libraries do not have specific budget earmarked for their library. This is one of the major hindrances to the development of a library. A regular budgetary support can give stability to the library; the library authorities can chart a clear path for its growth. It can help the library personnel to prioritize on their requirements and plan accordingly.

7. Theological libraries in Goa and coastal Karnataka are in the initial stage of automation. It is the responsibility of the management/ the concerned authorities to make the library staff aware about the advantages of automation and give necessary support for automation in the form of finance, knowledge, technical skills and training.

8. Theological libraries are working like islands; it is observed that there is no resource sharing activity taking place. The library staff as well as the management/ concerned authorities need to be convinced about the advantages of resource sharing and encouraged to be a part of such resource sharing activity. Those

libraries that are already sharing their resources with other libraries should take a lead in this direction.

9. Networking of the libraries, both digital and the physical is necessary in order to initiate any kind of resource sharing activity. It is noted that the library staff are not motivated towards the idea of networking while on the other hand; the users are completely in favor of networking of libraries. Those theological libraries in their initial stages of automation and digitization should consider the idea of networking of the libraries as the next step and take initiative to convince their counterparts about the advantages of networking.
10. The collection of the theological library is concentrated on the religion of their parent organization. As a result, there are limited members relating to that particular faith or religion. Libraries need to consider the wider interest of the people of the region where they are located and develop a more balanced collection to encourage a wider membership/ users/ visitors to the library and make use of the same.
11. Theological libraries have collections of rare materials dating back to many centuries at times. It is important to bring the manuscripts and rare documents to light, and hence the theological libraries can plan exhibitions or awareness programmes of such rare documents and material at regular intervals. This can ensure the much needed public participation and support in the cause of promotion of such libraries.
12. An attempt can be made by the theological libraries in the Goa or the Costal Karnataka region to come together and establish an

association or a group in order to promote the very purpose of theological libraries.

18. Conclusion

It was observed that these libraries have a huge treasure of knowledge resources; some of these are very rare and have archival value. The lack of professional management and the inherent conservative attitude on the part of the authorities make this collection unavailable to the public at large. These libraries work in isolation without interacting with their counter parts. There is no co-operation and resource sharing among these libraries. A national digital library on theology is proposed to promote the use of theological libraries.

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Anuradha V.
Research Student

Prof. A.K.Baradol
Research Guide